



केनोपनिषत्
Kena Upanishad
Chapter 1 (Continued)
Volume 3

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इति प्रथम खण्डः

केन - By whom कः देवः which is That Supreme being by whose power
- my mind entertains thoughts
- my breathing takes place naturally and spontaneously
- I am able to speak words and
- my eyes and ears function naturally as they do?

That was the question from the student.



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That Supreme Being which enables the ear to hear is the Ear of the ear, That is also the Mind of the mind, That is also the Organ of Speech of the Organ of speech, and indeed, That is also the प्राण of प्राण and the Eye of the eye. That Supreme Being is the ONE which is all.

That was the answer from the teacher.

The question from the student was a direct one, but the answer from the teacher did not appear to be that direct, because, the answer could not be any more direct. The teacher is now trying to explain that answer in terms of his own experience, but finds it difficult to communicate that experience. Still he is trying to help by saying:

न तत्र चक्षुर् गच्छति न वाग् गच्छति नो मनः ।
न विद्मो न विजानीमो यथा एतत् अनुशिष्यात् ॥ 1 - 3

अन्यत् एव तत् विदितात् अथो अविदितात् अधि ।
इति शुश्रुम पूर्वेषां ये नस्तद् व्याचक्षिरे ॥ 1 - 4

न तत्र चक्षुर् गच्छति न वाग् गच्छति न उ मनः गच्छति - The eye does not and cannot reach That Supreme Being. Likewise, words, and also the mind do not and cannot reach That Supreme Being. The eyes, ears, words, mind, etc. are just instruments by which one gains knowledge and experience of the world of objects, and also one communicates knowledge and experience about the world of objects. These instruments, by their very nature, cannot reach That Supreme Being because That is not an object in this creation. That is Subject Itself.

न विद्मः - We do not know, That Supreme being as an object of knowledge

न विजानीमः यथा एतत् अनुशिष्यात् Nor do we know how to communicate the knowledge and experience about That Supreme Being in any better way.

The knowledge and experience involved here is so transcendental that it leaves no tracks behind. Again and again our Upanishads speak of ब्रह्मन् as the end of the trackless path, but they do not leave us helpless. The Upanishads assure us that though it is difficult to reach That end, It is not unreachable.

It is not possible to teach about ब्रह्मन् in the way one teaches about the different fields of objective knowledge, but the student can be helped and guided in gaining knowledge of ब्रह्मन् . Such help and guidance is indeed the very purpose of all Upanishads, especially The Bhagvad Gita. The first requirement for such help and guidance is that the student



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must have the appropriate frame of mind. What is needed here is cultivated alertness and the capacity to learn from the indicated pointer words.

In the third verse of the केनोपनिषत्, the teacher impresses upon the student that the knowledge that he seeks cannot be simply given to him for the asking. He has to gain that knowledge by himself. "I am helpless to communicate it to you in the customary way, but I shall help you with a few pointers" says the teacher. In the next verse the teacher says,

अन्यत् एव तत् विदितात् - That Supreme Being is indeed other than everything that is known or knowable in this creation. That is the difficulty in teaching about ब्रह्मन्. That ब्रह्मन् is entirely different from everything known through the senses and the mind. Therefore, all our objective knowledge is not a great help in communicating knowledge about ब्रह्मन्. All our objective knowledge is only about the world of changes, दृश्यं - objective world which is subject to change. That Supreme being - That ब्रह्मन् we are talking about, is never subject to change. Therefore that ब्रह्मन् is not anything that is known or knowable in the world of objects

अथ उ But then again

तत् अविदितात् अधि - That Supreme Being - That ब्रह्मन् - is more than the unknown, It is other than the unknown, which means that That ब्रह्मन् is different from all that is known, and at the same time different from the unknown.

इति शुश्रुम पूर्वेषां ये नः तत् व्याचक्षिरे - Thus we have heard from our previous enlightened teachers who have explained IT to us until we truly gained That Knowledge by ourselves, each through one's own process of enquiry on ब्रह्मन्, with the help of the pointers provided by them.

By so saying, the teacher now encourages every student to embark upon one's own process of enquiry on the Nature of ब्रह्मन् with the help of the pointer already provided to them by the statement

अन्यत् एव तत् विदितात् अथो अविदितात् अधि - That ब्रह्मन् is different from all that is known. and at the same time, different from all that is Unknown.

Let us reflect on the above pointer to ब्रह्मन्.



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What is it that can be other than all that is known and also different than all that is unknown. That can only be The knower Itself, because, The Knower is the only one who can say "I know many things, and I also do not know many other things, but I am different from all that I know, and also all that I do not know."

Now who is that Knower? That is one's own self - the I in every person, who is other than all that the person knows, and at the same time, other than all that the person does not know. It is That knower - That "I" in every person which is called आत्मन् or ब्रह्मन्. It is That Knower that is pointed out by the Upanishad expression:

अन्यत् एव तत् विदितात् अथो अविदितात् अधि

It is that knower that is indicated by the वेद महावाक्य तत् त्वं असि - That ब्रह्मन् you are, because, You are the only ONE who is other than all that you know, and also all that you do not know.

Thus the Upanishad Pointer for the Knower "I"

अन्यत् एव तत् विदितात् अथो अविदितात् अधि has the same significance as the वेद महावाक्य तत् त्वं असि That you are.

With reference to an individual जीव, That Knower "I" is called आत्मन् - The SELF and with reference to the entire creation, which is also a जीव - That Knower "I" is called ब्रह्मन्. Being the SELF of every self in this creation, That Knower, That ब्रह्मन् has infinite dimensions (अनन्त स्वरूपं). The Upanishad now proceeds to elucidate the infinite Nature of that ब्रह्मन् through pointer words in the next five verses.

यत् वाचा अनभ्युदितं येन वाग् अभ्युध्यते ।
तदेव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि नेदं यदिदं उपासते ॥ 1 - 5

यन्मनसा न मनुते येन आहुः मनो मतं ।
तदेव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि नेदं यदिदं उपासते ॥ 1 - 6

यच्चक्षुषा न पश्यति येन चक्षुषि पश्यति ।
तदेव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि नेदं यदिदं उपासते ॥ 1 - 7



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यत् श्रोत्रेण न शृणोति येन श्रोत्रं इदं श्रुतम् ।
तदेव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि नेदं यदिदं उपासते ॥

1 - 8

यत् प्राणेन न प्राणिति येन प्राणः प्रणीयते ।
तदेव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि नेदं यदिदं उपासते ॥

1 - 9

You might have noted that the second line in each verse is the same - तदेव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि नेदं यदिदं उपासते. It is repeated five times to make sure that the student , you and I, understand clearly what the teacher wants to communicate through the first line in each of the five verses. These five verses, together, direct our attention again to the essential message of this Upanishad, communicated earlier in the first part of the second verse, namely The nature of ब्रह्मन् is

श्रोत्रस्य श्रोत्रं मनसो मनो यत्
वाचो ह वाचं स उ प्राणस्य प्राणः ।

चक्षुष चक्षुः (up to that. The last part of the verse namely अतिमुच्य धीराः प्रेत्य अस्मात् लोकात् अमृता भवन्ति - this part is dealt with in Chapter 2 of this Upanishad which we will see next time).

Pointing to That ब्रह्मन्, the teacher says

यत् वाचा अनभ्युदितं येन वाग् अभ्युध्यते ।
तदेव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि नेदं यदिदं उपासते ॥

1 - 5

यत् वाचा अनभ्युदितं - That which is not revealed by words as their meaning, but येन वाग् अभ्युध्यते -by which the words reveal their meaning (both to the speaker and to the listener)

त्वं विद्धि - तदेव ब्रह्म - Please understand - That alone is ब्रह्मन्, That is indeed ब्रह्मन्, न इदं - यत् इदं उपासते - Not this, not what people worship as an object. That which is not revealed by words, but by which words reveal their meaning, That is ब्रह्मन्. That was what was pointed out earlier as वाचो ह वाचं The word of the word. Again,

यन्मनसा न मनुते येन आहुः मनो मतं ।



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तदेव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि नेदं यदिदं उपासते ॥

1 - 6

यत् मनसा न मनुते - That which cannot be comprehended by the mind, but
येन आहुः मनो मतं - by which the mind is able to comprehend the world of objects and
changes

त्वं विद्धि - तदेव ब्रह्म Please understand that alone is ब्रह्मन्

न इदं यत् इदं उपासते - Not this, not what people worship as an object. That which cannot
be comprehended by the mind, but that by which mind is able to comprehend the world
of objects and changes - That is ब्रह्मन् - That is what was pointed out earlier as the
मनसो मनः, The mind of the mind. Again,

यच्चक्षुषा न पश्यति येन चक्षुषि पश्यति ।

तदेव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि नेदं यदिदं उपासते ॥

1 - 7

यत् चक्षुषा न पश्यति -That which cannot be seen by the eyes, but

येन चक्षुषि पश्यति - by whose grace eyes are capable of seeing,

त्वं विद्धि - तदेव ब्रह्म Please understand That alone is ब्रह्मन्

न इदं यत् इदं उपासते - Not this, not what people worship as an object. That which
cannot be seen by the eyes , but by whose grace the eyes are capable of seeing, That
is ब्रह्मन्, That is what was pointed out earlier as चक्षुषः चक्षुः The eye of the eyes. Again,

यत् श्रोत्रेण न शृणोति येन श्रोत्रं इदं श्रुतम् ।

तदेव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि नेदं यदिदं उपासते ॥

1 - 8

यत् श्रोत्रेण न शृणोति - That which is not heard by the ear as a sound, but

येन श्रोत्रं इदं श्रुतम् - By which the ear is able to hear whatever is heard

त्वं विद्धि - तदेव ब्रह्म - Please understand That alone is ब्रह्मन्

न इदं यत् इदं उपासते - Not this, not what people worship as an object, That which is not
heard by the ear as a Sound, but by which the ear is able to hear this sound -That is
ब्रह्मन्. That is what was pointed out earlier as श्रोत्रस्य श्रोत्रं the Ear of the ear. Again,

यत् प्राणेन न प्राणिति येन प्राणः प्रणीयते ।

तदेव ब्रह्म त्वं विद्धि नेदं यदिदं उपासते ॥

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ब्रह्मविद्या **Brahma Vidya**

यत् प्राणेन न प्राणिति - That which is not sustained by प्राण but

येन प्राणः प्रणीयते - That by which प्राण is sustained

त्वं विद्धि - तदेव ब्रह्म - Please understand, That alone is ब्रह्मन्

न इदं यत् इदं उपासते - Not this, not what people worship as an object. That which is not sustained by प्राण, but that by which प्राण is sustained, That is ब्रह्मन्, That is what was pointed out earlier as प्राणस्य प्राणः The प्राण of the प्राण

तदेव ब्रह्म - Such is the Nature of that ब्रह्मन्

त्वं विद्धि - That is the knowledge about ब्रह्मन् that you must understand, appreciate and absorb in your every day life. The Upanishad emphasizes नेदं - न इदं - Never mistake any इदं - any object in isolation as ब्रह्मन् .

इदं - means what? Anything objectifiable is इदं. Any object, any material, any possession, any wealth, any power, any glory, any accomplishment, any attribute, any form, any name or any situation in life - one separate from the other - That is इदं. The Upanishad points out that every such इदं is limited, and ever subject to change. Such इदं is not ब्रह्मन्. While no इदं is non-separate from ब्रह्मन्, no इदं by itself - no इदं in isolation is ब्रह्मन्. ब्रह्मन् is Limitless, all-inclusive, all-pervading, ever-existent, unchanging and unchangeable. It is That ब्रह्मन् whom we call ईश्वर.

ईशावास्यं इदं सर्वं - Every इदं in this creation is pervaded by ईश्वर, and hence non-separate from ईश्वर, while ईश्वर Itself exists independent of every इदं in this creation. It is That ईश्वर, That ब्रह्मन्, whom we worship in different Forms and Names.

The Upanishad says - It is ब्रह्मन् - You are; It is ब्रह्मन् you want to be; It is ब्रह्मन् you really seek by various forms of worship of ईश्वर. Who-so-ever you worship, how-so-ever you worship, you are worshipping only That Limitless, all pervading, all-inclusive, ever-existent ब्रह्मन् only, not just any Form and name, any इदं in isolation.

Directing our बुद्धि towards ब्रह्मन्, the Upanishad says repeatedly,

नेदं यदिदं उपासते - न इदं यत् इदं उपासते - Not this, what people worship as इदं, an object in this creation. It is particularly important for us to understand this statement properly. It is not a statement against worship of परमेश्वर in various Forms and Names.



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It is not a statement against the so-called idol worship. It is a statement warning against any form of exclusiveness, any form of isolation, any form of fanaticism in the mode of worship of परमेश्वर.

The Upanishad calls for Enlightenment in the mode of worship **Of परमेश्वर**, rooted in ईश्वर ज्ञानं - ईशावास्यं इदं सर्वं ज्ञानं - पूर्णं ज्ञानं - Totality of knowledge, namely that परमेश्वर is All-inclusive, all-pervading, ever-existent, changeless, limitless, all-forms, All Attributes, All Powers, the cause of all causes, Itself being causeless. That परमेश्वर is the SELF of every self in this creation, animate or inanimate, form or without form, with name or without name. It is that परमेश्वर, That ब्रह्मन्, That आत्मा, That SELF that one worships.

The overriding objective of life is the realization of That SELF in oneself. The भगवत् गीता teaches us that the means for such self-realization is through अनन्य ईश्वर भक्ति, devotion to That परमेश्वर non-separate from oneself, and कर्म योग बुद्धि attitude of कर्म योग in all thought, word and deed. And the most effective way to cultivate अनन्य ईश्वर भक्ति, and कर्म योग बुद्धि is through सगुण ब्रह्म उपासन, worship of परमेश्वर in Forms and Names of one's own choice, recognizing परमेश्वर as ईशावास्यं इदं सर्वं and worshipping that परमेश्वर with श्रद्धा, unqualified faith in oneself, and also in one's mode of worship of that परमेश्वर.

Such सगुण ब्रह्म उपासन, worship of परमेश्वर in different Forms and names is indeed a necessary pre-requisite for ultimate SELF-Realization - That is Sri Krishna's message to Arjuna, and indeed to all of us. We may recall here some of Sri Krishna's words on ईश्वर उपासन, - worship of परमेश्वर in Gita chapters 9 and 12.

सततं कीर्तयन्तो मां यतन्तश्च दृढवृताः ।

नमस्यन्तश्च मां भक्त्या नित्ययुक्ता उपासते ॥ 9 - 14

ज्ञान यज्ञेन चाप्यन्ये यजन्तो मां उपासते ।

एकत्वेन पृथक्त्वेन बहुधा विश्वतो मुखम् ॥ 9 - 15

मय्यावेश्य मनो ये मां नित्ययुक्ता उपासते ।



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श्रद्धया परयोपेताः ते मे युक्ततमा मताः ॥

12 -2

We have seen these verses not too long ago, and we will see them again in detail in their own context a little later in our Scripture Reading. At this time, it is important for us to understand that the Upanishad words

नेदं यदिदं उपासते - is not a statement against the worship of परमेश्वर in different Forms and Names, but it is a statement calling for recognition of the infinite dimensions (अनन्त स्वरूपं) of परमेश्वर and for Enlightenment in the Mode of Worship of परमेश्वर to gain SELF-Realization.

Thus ends the first chapter of केनोपनिषत्. We will go to chapter 2 next time.